

July 4/1865

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
UNION LEAGUE
OF PHILADELPHIA,

*In Commemoration of the Eighty-Ninth Anniversary
of American Independence,*

JULY 4th, 1865.

ORATION OF CHARLES GIBBONS, Esq.

PHILADELPHIA:
King & Baird, Printers, No. 607 Sansom Street.
1865.

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Francis Newton Thorpe



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THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA, in pursuance of public notice, held a meeting in the Academy of Music on this day, in commemoration of the 89th Anniversary of American Independence.

At 12 o'clock precisely the members of the League entered the building, and took their places on the stage, where seats had been provided.

MORTON McMICHAEL, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents of the League, took the chair, with CHARLES GIBBONS, Esq., the Orator of the Day, on his right, and DANIEL DOUGHERTY, Esq., the Reader of the Declaration, on his left. A large number of the clergy occupied seats on the right of the members.

The proceedings were opened by an appropriate prayer from the Rev. GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN.

“The Star-Spangled Banner” was then sung by the choir of the League. During the final chorus, the members and the whole audience rose, giving to the performance a most impressive effect.

The Declaration of American Independence was then read by DANIEL DOUGHERTY, Esq.

WHEN, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its power in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history

of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused, for a long time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the danger of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of land.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our consent:

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is, at this time, transporting large armies of foreign

mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow-citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts made by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace, friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE and

INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

WILLIAM PACA,	<i>Maryland.</i>
SAMUEL CHACE,	<i>Maryland.</i>
LEWIS MORRIS,	<i>New York.</i>
WILLIAM FLOYD,	<i>New York.</i>
JOHN ADAMS,	<i>Massachusetts.</i>
FRANCIS LEWIS,	<i>New York.</i>
CESAR RODNEY,	<i>Delaware.</i>
GEORGE READ,	<i>Delaware.</i>
GEORGE WYTHE,	<i>Virginia.</i>
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
THOMAS MCKEAN,	<i>Delaware.</i>
LYMAN HALL,	<i>Georgia.</i>
WILLIAM ELLERY,	<i>Rhode Island.</i>
GEORGE CLYMER,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
WILLIAM WILLIAMS,	<i>Connecticut.</i>
JOHN HANCOCK,	<i>Massachusetts.</i>
BENJAMIN HARRISON,	<i>Virginia.</i>
CHARLES CARROLL,	<i>Maryland.</i>
BENJAMIN RUSH,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
SAMUEL ADAMS,	<i>Massachusetts.</i>
JOSEPH HEWES,	<i>North Carolina.</i>
EDWARD RUTLEDGE,	<i>South Carolina.</i>
JOHN HART,	<i>New Jersey.</i>
JOHN MORTON,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
ARTHUR MIDDLETON,	<i>South Carolina.</i>

MATHEW THORNTON,	<i>New Hampshire.</i>
SAMUEL HUNTINGTON,	<i>Connecticut.</i>
WILLIAM HOOPER,	<i>North Carolina.</i>
THOMAS HAYWARD, JR.,	<i>South Carolina.</i>
ROBERT TREAT PAINE,	<i>Massachusetts.</i>
FRANCIS HOPKINSON,	<i>New Jersey.</i>
WILLIAM WHIPPLE,	<i>New Hampshire.</i>
JAMES SMITH,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
GEORGE TAYLOR,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
BUTTON GWINNETT,	<i>Georgia.</i>
FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE,	<i>Virginia.</i>
JOSIAH BARTLETT,	<i>New Hampshire.</i>
STEPHEN HOPKINS,	<i>Rhode Island.</i>
JOHN WITHERSPOON,	<i>New Jersey.</i>
PHILIP LIVINGSTON,	<i>New York.</i>
RICHARD STOCKTON,	<i>New Jersey.</i>
THOMAS LYNCH, JR.,	<i>South Carolina.</i>
RICHARD HENRY LEE,	<i>Virginia.</i>
THOMAS WILLING,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
ELBRIDGE GERRY,	<i>Massachusetts.</i>
GEORGE ROSS,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
THOMAS STONE,	<i>Maryland.</i>
OLIVER WOLCOTT,	<i>Connecticut.</i>
ROGER SHERMAN,	<i>Connecticut.</i>
THOMAS JEFFERSON,	<i>Virginia.</i>
JAMES WILSON,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
THOMAS NELSON,	<i>Virginia.</i>
GEORGE WALTON,	<i>Georgia.</i>
ROBERT MORRIS,	<i>Pennsylvania.</i>
ABRAHAM CLARKE,	<i>New Jersey.</i>
THOMAS McKEAN,	<i>Delaware.</i>
CARTER BRAXTON,	<i>Virginia.</i>
JOHN PENN,	<i>North Carolina.</i>

“Rally Round the Flag” was then sung by the choir, the whole audience joining in the chorus.

CHARLES GIBBONS, Esq., the Orator of the Day, was then introduced, and spoke as follows:

GENTLEMEN OF THE UNION LEAGUE,
LADIES AND FELLOW-CITIZENS
OF THE UNITED STATES:

America comes from her battle-fields to-day pale for the loss of blood, with all the stars on her victorious flag--commanding peace! In her brief career of eighty-nine years, she has given to history its most remarkable events, to science its most useful discoveries, to the mechanic arts their most important improvements, to labor its highest rewards; and she now exhibits to mankind the triumphant success of her popular government.

When, haggard and weary under the yoke of her oppressor, she ventured to deny the divinity of despotism, and to assert the inalienable rights of all men to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the darkness upon the face of the earth was too thick to be penetrated, by the light which she hung out to the world. She stood alone. Without army or navy, without purse or scrip, with no friend among the nations in whom she could trust, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of her intentions, she opposed her sublime, unfaltering faith, to the brutal force of England.

"I am surprised," said John Adams in 1776, "at the suddenness as well as greatness of this revolution. Britain has been filled with folly, America with wisdom. It is the will of Heaven that the two countries should be sundered forever; it may be the will of Heaven that America shall suffer calamities still more wasting, and distresses yet more dreadful. If this be the case, the furnace of affliction produces refinement in States as well as individuals; but I submit all my hopes and fears to an overruling Providence, in which I firmly believe."

“The day will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival, commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward—forevermore. You may think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure it will cost to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these States; yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of light and glory, and that posterity will triumph in this day’s transaction.”

So spake the patriot prophet, who, a few days before, had risen on the floor of Congress and reverently asked that, the blessings of Heaven might rest on the new-born Republic, and make it the most glorious of all that ever lived. He may not have foreseen the dreadful carnage through which the Republic has recently passed. From a deeper gloom than his eyes beheld, from a hotter furnace than blazed upon his vision, America comes forth into the light of peace, liberty and glory, to keep her anniversary festival, and commemorate the day of her deliverance.

We may properly inquire on this occasion, how it came that human slavery, the cause of all our troubles and afflictions, and always at war with the principles of the Revolution, was so strangely domesticated with them, as to baffle the efforts of the ablest statesmen, and defy the power of Christianity itself to cast it out. Suffer me, therefore, to refer to parts of the history of the revolutionary struggle which may solve this question; and, pardon me if, in so doing, I vex your ears with a “thrice-told tale.” It is due to the memory of the Fathers of the Republic, that they should not be implicated in a crime of which they were not only innocent, but constantly condemned, and that the responsibility should rest where it justly belongs.

For a period of more than one hundred and fifty years

anterior to the Declaration, and more than a quarter of a century after, England was engaged in the slave trade. She had stolen from Africa upwards of three millions of men, women, and children, of whom half a million died upon her hands from starvation, cruel treatment, and disease; the remainder she condemned to perpetual slavery. She had about three hundred thousand in her American colonies when they declared their independence. In order to secure to Englishmen a monopoly of the wealth to be derived from the business, ten English judges had given their opinion that *negroes were merchandize*, and that therefore the navigation acts excluded aliens from the trade. The Crown, the Church, the aristocracy, and the merchants of England were all implicated in this horrible and infamous traffic, and all united in their hostility to free labor in America. The people of the colonies attempted in vain to relieve themselves and their country from the terrible curse. They passed laws restraining the importation of negroes, which were not allowed to take effect. In 1770 the king issued instructions to the Governor of Virginia, by which he was commanded on pain of the highest displeasure, to assent to no law whereby the importation of slaves should be in any respect prohibited or obstructed.

The most earnest remonstrances against the trade were addressed to the king, on the score of its inhumanity and corrupting and destructive influences; but they resulted in the most peremptory orders to his officers in the colonies to protect and maintain it. The thought and reasoning of England on the subject was that "negro labor will keep our British colonies in due subserviency to the interests of their mother country; for while our plantations depend only on planting *by negroes*, our colonies can never prove injurious to British manufactures, never become independent of their kingdom."* This argument satisfied the con-

* In 1699, Parliament declared "that no wool, yarn or woollen manufactures of their American plantations, should be shipped there, or even laden, in order to be transported from thence to any place whatever." (Pitkins' *Pol. and Civil Hist. U. S.*)

sciences of Englishmen and justified the policy of their Government.

The Continental Congress of 1774 unanimously declared: "We will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels or sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it."

In the same year Mr. Jefferson wrote to the Provincial Convention of Virginia that "*the abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state.* But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa; yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which amounted to prohibitions, have hitherto been defeated by his Majesty's negative, thus preferring the immediate advantage of a few British corsairs, to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice." The Convention exhausted its power over the subject by adopting a resolution, presented by Peyton Randolph, that "We will neither ourselves import nor purchase any slave or slaves imported by any other person, either from Africa, the West Indies, or any other place." A year afterwards, the Earl of Dartmouth, referring to the efforts of the colonies to abolish the system, wrote to a colonial

In 1719, the House of Commons declared "that the erecting of manufactories in the Colonies tended to *lessen the dependence on Great Britain.*" (*Ib.*)

In order to protect British hatters from competition in America, Parliament passed an act in 1732, prohibiting hats from being *laden upon a horse, cart or other carriage in the Colonies*, with an intent to be exported to any other plantation, or to any place whatsoever under a penalty of forfeiture of the hats so laden, and a fine of five hundred pounds! The same act prohibited the employment of *blacks or negroes* in the Colonies, in the business of making hats; and also prohibited any person from engaging in the manufacture who had not served as an apprentice in the business for *seven years!* (*See British Statutes at Large.*)

agent: "We cannot allow the colonies to check or discourage in any degree a traffic so beneficial to the nation."

Three months prior to the Declaration, Congress solemnly resolved "that no slaves should be imported into any of the thirteen colonies." The resolution was approved and respected by all of them; it expressed the feeling of the American heart, and the matured judgment of American statesmen.

The original draft of the Declaration contained, among others, this charge against the King: "He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty, in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of *infidel* Powers, is the warfare of the *Christian* King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce." Mr. Jefferson says that this clause was disapproved by some Southern gentlemen, whose reflections were not yet matured to the full abhorrence of the traffic, and it was, therefore, stricken out.

Two other clauses remain, and have been read to-day, having relation to the same subject:

"He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."

"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States, for that purpose obstructing the laws for the naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others encouraging their migration hither, and *raising the conditions of new appropriations of land.*"

These clauses of the indictment have direct reference to the laws by which the colonists hoped to abolish slavery, but which the crown refused to sanction; and to the slave policy of England, to exclude free labor from the country.

I revive these parts of our early history for the purpose of showing that, the spirit of slavery was not an American spirit, and had but little influence here at the time of the Declaration. The men of the revolution were the friends of universal liberty. Through the long years of fruitless effort to obtain from England a peaceful recognition of their rights, they had investigated and explored the foundations of human government, and satisfied themselves of the end which it was intended to secure. Looking to the source of all power, and to the application of the Divine law to the human family, they could find no precedent or authority to justify oppression in any form. Consulting their Bibles, they found many instances where the wrath of God had fallen in terrible judgments upon the oppressor. Whether they read the history of Jerusalem and its despotic kings, and surveyed the ruins of the city—or followed the centuries back till they saw the waters rolling over the hosts of Pharaoh—whether they heard the thunder from Sinai or the groan from the Cross of Calvary, they saw the arm of the Omnipotent falling on the oppressor, and heard the voice of admonition to the nations, and of mercy to mankind—“*All men are created equal.*” On this principle, accepted as a self-evident truth, and therefore unlimited in its application and immutable as the throne of the Eternal, they laid the foundations of the new Republic.

But, while men may perfectly agree upon great fundamental truths, it often happens that the proper and general application of them is necessarily deferred by contingencies not foreseen or provided for. The Declaration was issued by a Congress of Independent and Sovereign States. It was not the act of one organized government, but a solemn proclamation of certain rights which no system of government could lawfully take from a people. The States were united, not by a constitution or compact, for none at that time existed, but by the Declaration itself; by the claim which each one had, in common with all the others, to

the same things; and by the dangers which assailed those things. The Union thus formed was strengthened and hallowed by the blood which had already been shed in the common cause; but there was no one government which could make laws to act upon or bind the people. Congress, being a mere convention of States, was not invested with such authority, and therefore had no power to prosecute to their legitimate results the principles which it asserted in the Declaration. That duty was necessarily left to the people of the several States; and before the close of the century, or very soon afterwards, a majority of States had made provision for the emancipation of their slaves.

The Federal Government, under the articles of confederation, weak and insufficient as it was, has left some pleasant memories. It was during the confederation that Congress passed the ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States, northwest of the Ohio river, which had been ceded by Virginia, embracing an area of about one hundred and eighty-five thousand square miles.

It was the first legislation in anticipation of the formation of new States, and their admission into the Union. It was the first opportunity offered to Congress to illustrate by its works, the faith of the Revolution on the subject of slavery.

And, accordingly, in the twelfth year of the Independence of America, while England was yet eagerly pursuing her nefarious trade in human flesh, and Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp were denounced and persecuted by her slave spirit for their efforts to expose its infamy, the Congress of the United States, and every State in the American Union ordained that slavery, should be forever excluded from the great territory of the Northwest. We thank the Confederation for that glorious and irrevocable decree that gave freedom and civilization to the great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan; and we thank those great States for Abraham Lincoln, and for the axe they have laid at the root of human slavery.

While America was thus employed in extending the empire of freedom, the spirit of slavery was maliciously at work in its native land of England, tearing to pieces those monuments which marked the presence of liberty in former years.

It possessed the souls of the King and the aristocracy, and controlled the action of Parliament.

It boldly assailed the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, and the rights of the people to assemble in meetings for the purpose of public discussion. Men who opposed the slave-trade were constantly insulted, denounced as Jacobins, and shunned in society as enemies of the ministers.

Men whose humanity was shocked by the infamous manner in which England treated her French prisoners of war, and ventured to remonstrate against it, were ranked with the enemies of their country. Persons were fined, imprisoned, and transported for expressing their opinions merely, on public questions. A law was enacted by which every public meeting was forbidden, unless notice of it were published in a newspaper five days beforehand, containing a full statement of its objects, signed by householders.

This law was applied to all meetings held for considering or preparing any petition, complaint, or address to the king, or either branch of Parliament, or for the alteration of any matter established in church or state. Of course, it applied to meetings called to remonstrate against the slave-trade.

Any justice of the peace had authority to compel a meeting to disperse, although held in pursuance of lawful notice, if, in his opinion, the language of the speakers was disrespectful to the king or to the Government. If twelve persons or more remained together for one hour after the order to disperse, the act provided that "it shall be adjudged felony without the benefit of clergy; and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, *and shall suffer death as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy.*"

This bloody act was passed in 1795.

Four years later another act was passed, forbidding any field or place to be used for lecturing or debating, without a special license from a magistrate. All circulating-libraries and reading-rooms were placed under the same restriction. No person could lend or hire, in his own house, a book, pamphlet, or newspaper, under a penalty of one hundred pounds a day. If a man allowed lectures or debates, even under his own roof, it was a crime for which he was liable to be punished for keeping a disorderly house. This statute was passed in the thirty-ninth year of George III.

The story is not half told; but this is enough to show what the spirit of slavery accomplished in England, within the recollection of men who are now in her ministry, and in deep sympathy with its efforts to abolish the work of the American Revolution.

Meanwhile the people of America had adopted a Constitution. It ordained and established a National Government founded on the principles of the Revolution. Mr. Madison had successfully opposed the use of a word in any part of it that would recognize a right of property in human beings. In his survey of the plan of Government which it proposed, he wrote thus in *The Federalist*: “The first question that presents itself is ‘Whether the general form and aspect of the Government be *strictly republican*?’ It is evident that no other form would be reconcilable with the genius of the people of America, and with the fundamental principles of the Revolution; or with that honorable determination which animates every votary of freedom, *to rest all our political experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government.*”

In the same paper he defines a republic to be a government which derives all its powers directly or indirectly from the great body of the people, and is administered by persons holding their offices during pleasure, for a limited period, or during good behavior.

He adds, “It is *essential* to such a Government that it be

derived from the great body of the society; not from an inconsiderable proportion, *or a favored class of it*; otherwise a handful of tyrannical nobles, exercising their oppressions by a delegation of their powers, might aspire to the rank of republicans, and claim for their Government the honorable title of Republic." (See *Federalist* No. 39.)

The first article of the Constitution provides, among other things, that "The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States; *and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature.*"

It is manifest that under this provision, standing alone, any State in the Union having a Legislature would have a right to send its representatives to Congress without regard to its form of government. "The qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of its Legislature, might not extend to the body of the people, but be enjoyed exclusively by a landed aristocracy, or "a handful of tyrannical nobles." Such a State would not, according to Mr. Madison's definition, be a Republican State, but an oligarchy, which stifles the popular will.

Could the founders of our National Government have intended that Congress, the only power in America having authority to make laws which *act upon and bind all the people of the United States*, should be composed in whole, or in part, of representatives of "tyrannical nobles," or of an aristocracy having no sympathy with the people, and no interests in common with them? Did they intend that the Government should exercise no authority or control over State institutions, and have no right to protect the people of a State from oppressive rulers, or the people of the United States from the mischievous influence of such rulers in the legislation of the country? The Constitution itself answers the question:

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government." That is, accord-

ing to Mr. Madison, a government which derives all its powers *from the great body of the people*: or, according to the fundamental principle of the Revolution, a government which shall *secure to all men* the inalienable rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," *deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed*.

This guarantee is the vital spark of the whole system which America accepted and ordained. When we add to it the further provision, that "each House (of Congress) shall be the judge of the elections, returns, *and qualifications* of its own members," the power to protect and secure the liberties of the people, through popular representation, is complete. A truly Republican Congress is, therefore, the common and constitutional right of the American people; and such a Congress can never be tainted or corrupted by the spirit of slavery, no matter what form of oppression or of injustice that spirit may assume. The admonition should be written upon its outer and inner walls: "*Let no one enter here who denies the truth of the declaration that all men are created equal!*" This was the Congress through which the men of the Revolution expected America to become a shining light to the nations of the earth.

There was but little agitation in the public mind on the subject of slavery, until the application of Missouri for admission into the Union. It seems not to have been anticipated that, under our system of government, such a pernicious English plant could flourish very long in America. Indeed, the thoughts of the people during a considerable part of the first eighteen years of the present century were less directed to the subject of negro slavery than to their relations with their old oppressor. England was at war with France, because the French people had caught the spirit of the American Revolution, and sought deliverance from a despotic Government. Always true to slavery, she sided with despotism, and plunged into a war to suppress the spirit of reform that was finding its way into the heart of Europe. She had no other object to accomplish.

America being a neutral, had engrossed the chief part of the carrying trade of the world, and was rapidly rising to importance as a maritime power. Our flag was everywhere and England resolved it should be nowhere. It was to be driven from the ocean, not by legitimate war, but by an order in council. Accordingly, the order was issued, and here it is: "All the ports and places of France and her allies, from which, though not at war with his Majesty, the British flag is excluded, *shall be subject to the same restrictions in respect to trade and navigation as if the same was actually blockaded in the most strict and rigorous manner*; and that all trade in articles, the produce and manufactures of the said countries, or colonies, shall be deemed unlawful, *and all such articles declared good prize*." This order was aimed at America, and intended to sweep her commerce from the seas. It was in plain violation of public law, which recognizes no blockade of a port, where no adequate force is stationed to prevent an entry. But what does the spirit of slavery care for public law? It was an insolent infringement of the well-settled rights of neutrals. But why should England care for that? America had no navy to protect her commerce, and therefore England captured our trading vessels, confiscated their cargoes, and seized our ships almost in the mouths of our harbors, on suspicion of an intent to violate her paper blockade!

Under the claim of right her cruisers boarded our vessels, seized our seamen, cast them into loathsome dungeons, or compelled them to fight her battles, on the pretence that they were British subjects. She had instigated the Indians to hostility against us, and had sent a commissioner to Massachusetts to negotiate for the neutrality of the Northern States, and their separation from the Union in the event of a war. She had upon the ocean a hundred ships-of-the-line, and more than a thousand vessels of war carried her flag. The navy of America consisted of *four frigates and eight sloops-of-war!* Would America resist her aggressions? She asked the same question in 1775, and it was

answered at Lexington, and Concord, and Bunker Hill! It was answered the second time from the decks of the Constitution, and the cotton bales at New Orleans!

The great and momentous question of the extension of slavery, forced itself upon the country in the eighteenth year of the century, on the application of Missouri for admission into the Union as a slave State. It absorbed all other questions, and enlisted all the intellectual and moral force that could be found among the people. The North, regarded the extension of slavery as hostile to the true principles of the Government, contrary to a sound and just construction of the Constitution, repugnant to all the teachings of Christianity, and dangerous to the future peace of the country. It maintained the faith of the revolution. The South insisted that, slavery had a right to carry its chains into any Territory of the United States, denied the authority of the Government to restrain its will or resist its march, or to require a free constitution as a condition precedent to the admission of a State into the Union. The popular branch of Congress contained a majority favorable to the views of the North, and the Senate a majority on the other side. For nearly three years the country was in a blaze of excitement. The South threatened to dissolve the Union if the North refused to accede to her demands; and civil war seemed imminent. For the sake of Union and of Peace the North yielded: not basely; not by a surrender of her faith, but by consenting to a compromise which only postponed the inevitable conflict, while Missouri entered the Union, rattling in triumph the chains she had bolted on her sinews.

Was it right or wrong? Whatever it may have been then, God has made it right at last; for those very chains attracted the lightning of his wrath, and Missouri, desolated and repentant, lifts up her voice to-day for Liberty and Union!

As we look back to that period now, through the events that connect it with the present, we can almost read the will

of the Almighty respecting this great national sin. We can almost understand the causes that influenced Him in permitting it to extend its power, build its idolatrous temples on freedom's soil, and blaspheme His name by inscribing it on their walls. He intended it to fall by its own acts; to perish as it had lived—by the sword; to die suddenly, not gradually, in the culmination of its power and under the weight of its crimes, when no spot should be left on the American continent where its foul and uneasy spirit could find a resting-place. Had its career in the United States been checked in 1821 by the refusal of the people to admit slave States into the Union, it would have sought refuge and a throne in the Mexican territory of Texas. There, in a genial clime, it might have established its empire over a country twice as large as Great Britain and Ireland, and exceeding in extent the whole empire of France. An independent and aggressive nation, all Mexico would have succumbed to its influence, and, extending its posts across the continent, its flag would have been unfurled on the coast of the Pacific.

But the Missouri Compromise led to opposite results. Emigration from the United States to Texas commenced about the time of the admission of Missouri, and Texas became an independent slave State in 1836. In 1845 slavery was well assured of its supremacy in the United States, and Texas was attracted to the seat of its power. Reserving the right of sending ten members to the Senate by dividing herself into ten States, she annexed to the Union her two hundred and fifty thousand square miles of territory, all dedicated to human slavery.

This was not enough. Insatiate in its demands, new requisitions were made, and the flag of the Union floated over the halls of the Montezumas.

Our eagles held the golden gates of California, and New Mexico completed our conquests. Five hundred thousand square miles, were thus taken from Mexico and annexed to the territory of the United States, in anticipation of the future wants of slavery, now almost ready to spring at the

throat of Liberty, and assert an indefeasible title to the Government.

It felt strong enough to accomplish in America all that it did in its native England at the close of the eighteenth century.

It assailed the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.

It had applied the torch to buildings where men assembled to expose its crimes. It denounced them as enemies of their country and insulted them with opprobrious names.

It mobbed its opponents in Northern cities, and hung them in its own.

It robbed the mails of newspapers and pamphlets which dared to question its divinity.

It punished with stripes the Christian woman who taught the slave to read that Christ died for all men.

It could pursue its victims into the free States, and, by authority of law, require of freemen the offices of blood-hounds.

It could control all the patronage of the Government and the proceedings of political conventions, and boastfully announced that the day was near, when it would call the roll of its quivering flesh at the foot of the monument on Bunker Hill. What else remained for slavery to do?

Not yet satiated with crime, it paused in its career to survey the fields of its future operations. It saw that the spirit of Independence and the love of liberty were identified with the free labor of the country. The enterprise of free labor was driving the wilderness before it, and all the Great West was vocal with its industry. It had sealed the Rocky Mountains, possessed itself of California, and fixed her golden star in the national constellation. Hewing its way through the primeval forests, it had led the free State of Oregon into the Union. It was building school-houses along the line of its march, and thriving towns and great cities where rising everywhere by its command. It

was covering the Pacific with the sails of its commerce. It was reading the Declaration of Independence in the Territory of Kansas, close to the offended ear of Missouri. A free press and freedom of speech were spreading the light and blessings of civilization all around it, and opposing impassable barriers to the entrance of slavery. Churches were springing up on all the hill-sides, and in the valleys, where, on God's Sabbath day, it wiped the sweat of toil from its brow, and lifted up its soul in thanksgiving and praise.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the bloody history of Kansas, tell what infernal fires burned in the heart of slavery, when its eyes beheld this majestic growth of the principles of the Revolution.

That poor old man who threw himself at its feet, and was led in its chains to the Presidential chair, could tell us, if he would, the conditions to which he was bound. He was to have no successor. The end of his Administration was to be the end of the Government of the United States. His oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, was nothing. True to the spirit that owned him, and submissive to its commands, he was ready and willing to surrender the Union and end its history in the blood of a civil war.

Under his administration, the North was disarmed, our national ships ordered to foreign stations, and our forts and arsenals in the South filled with munitions of war for the use of slavery. The treasury was plundered, and prominent officers of the army were corrupted and suborned against their country. He saw slavery mustering its cohorts, and investing the fort in Charleston harbor, where the faithful Anderson and his sixty men were guarding our flag, and, though armed with all the power of the Government, he abandoned that little garrison to die by treason, or submit to its demands.

He was patient and non-resistant, when the same power seized the well-furnished forts and arsenals, and all the

public property in the South, tore the flag of the nation from every staff within reach of its perfidious hands, and organized the rebellion. If the official conduct of this unhappy man, has been overruled for good, by the immortal King who tolerates no treason, let us hope that he may find some consolation in that final judgment, as he goes down to his grave, dishonored and unmourned.

Thanks to the Great Disposer of events and of men, he had a successor in a fearless and virtuous representative of the free labor of the country. Abraham Lincoln had been reared in its schools and worshipped in its churches. The first echoes of the morning were the echoes of his axe, and, still speaking to all mankind, they proclaim that, where human equality is established, neither the sweat of toil nor the accident of humble birth can close the avenue to honorable fame; that under a government founded on justice, the only passports to universal respect, are virtue industry and the love of God. These echoes will roll on from century to century, heralding the advance of the most perfect civilization that the world has ever known.

It was the mission of Abraham Lincoln to confirm the people in the faith of the Revolution, and through them to cast out of America the evil spirit of slavery. He knew that their love for the Union was not a mere sentimental excitement or a passion that might burn itself to death; but a deep-rooted affection, that finds perpetual sustenance in the self-evident truth of human equality, which the Union was made to secure, and which springs up into everlasting life. This is what raised our armies and maintained them in the field. This is what poured the wealth of the people into the public Treasury, and gave them confidence in the stability of their Government. The faith of the Revolution was summoned to its third conflict with the power of slavery and despotism, which it had twice overcome in its wars with England.

If this war had been fought on any other principle, we should have been beaten. Had we started out with an

amended Declaration, and announced that all men are *not* created equal, that some men have natural rights which are denied to others, that the object of government is to protect wealth, not liberty, to secure and confirm the power of the strong over the weak, Lord Russell would have been neither discourteous nor malicious when he spoke of our Government in Parliament as "*the Government of the late United States.*" For then, indeed, we should have abandoned all that the Union was made for, and nothing would have been left to fill the measure of our disgrace, but to obliterate the memory of our fathers, and return to the embrace of England and the chains of slavery.

England and slavery have not been separated in their hatred of the Union, or in the desire for its destruction. How could it be otherwise than that a strong sympathy should exist between two powers whose statutes denounced the same penalties against the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the right of the people to assemble in public meetings to petition for the redress of grievances? What else are we to expect from England now, than remonstrances against the punishment of traitors, who have been doing her service in this bloody war against the Union?

We have seen that one of her objects in filling the colonies with slaves, was to protect herself from the competition which the enterprise and skill of free labor might inaugurate in America. She has never yet surrendered her idea of keeping us dependent upon her workshops and manufactures. At the close of the war of 1812-'15, the present Lord Brougham declared, in one of his speeches in the House of Commons, of which he was a member, that it was the policy of England, "*by means of excessive exports,* to stifle in the cradle those rising manufactures in the United States, which the war had forced into existence." It is now a well-known fact that immense contributions in money were raised in England to corrupt our elections and secure the repeal of the American tariff of 1842. The protest of

Mr. Bulwer, the British minister, against the imposition of a duty on foreign iron by Congress, addressed to the American Secretary of State, only a few years ago, is well remembered.* England has always hoped that slavery in the United States, as it extended its dominion and power, would finally check the growth of our manufactures and restore to her a measure of that dependence which she lost by the war of the Revolution.

Had the rebellion, in which her sympathies were so deeply enlisted, proved successful, her desires would have been realized as to the Southern Confederacy at least, and the work of disintegration among the remaining States, would probably have enabled her to extend her own dominions on the American continent.

The sudden uprising of the American people in defence of their Government, was the inevitable result of our free institutions. It will satisfy posterity that, the failure to abolish slavery by law, and the consent to its extension, from time to time, ought not to be considered as unpardonable infidelity to the principles of the Revolution, but rather as the result of a spirit of forbearance, strengthened, perhaps too much, by the difficulties which surrounded the abrogation of a system of labor, which had existed on the continent for more than two centuries.

On the very day that slavery drew the sword upon liberty for the purpose of establishing its permanent empire, the American people, chosen instruments of Divine justice, determined it should die. It was a terrible conflict with all the hosts of hell. The Christian world never witnessed its like before, and never will again. The thing is

* In 1750, Parliament passed an act *prohibiting* the erection or continuance of any mill or other engine in the Colonies, for slitting or rolling iron, or any plating forge to work with a tilt hammer, or any furnace for making steel in the Colonies, *under a penalty of two hundred pounds*. And every such mill, engine, plating forge and furnace in the Colonies was declared a *common nuisance*, and the Governors of the Colonies, on the information of two witnesses, were directed to cause the same to be abated within *thirty days*, or to forfeit the sum of five hundred pounds! (*Stat. at Large*, vol. vii., p. 263.)

dead! Its career ended as it began—in blasphemy and blood. With its bishops in the Church, it called upon God for help; with its assassins in the capital, it appealed to hell for succor. Its pimps in the British Parliament; its friends in the British ministry, and its rogues in the London Exchange, have defiled themselves in vain—they could not save it. With the foulest record of crime that was ever exposed to Omnipotent wrath, it has been hurled into an abyss from which it will never rise, but sink down—down—down—deeper and deeper, in fathomless infamy, through all eternity!

The patriot armies of the republic, which struck this blow for the principles of the Declaration, pass into a glorious history. The living, resume the duties of the citizen and the pursuits of peace, and will be honored forever by the friends of liberty and justice throughout the world. The dead, will rise with the revolutionary fathers on each return of this anniversary, to receive from a free people, to the end of time, the memorials of their gratitude.

As I pass through the public hospitals and look upon the soldiers and sailors, whose mutilated bodies attest their fidelity to our flag, and upon those, wasted by disease contracted on the weary march or in the loathsome prisons of slavery, who patiently and sadly await the order to their graves; when I visit the battle-fields, where the victims of treason rest by thousands in the embrace of death; when I see the trembling tear of the loyal mother, as she thanks God for the solace that her son was true to his country and died in its cause, I cannot but ask, whether there is no terrible retribution in this world for the living and boastful traitors who wrought this woe? Whether mercy, which ever dwells in the Christian heart, should exhaust herself upon the blood-stained suppliants who have never known her, or, looking into the future, should not rather demand a present atonement for the salvation of posterity?

That prominent and leading men, educated in the art of

war at the public expense, in the public military academy, honored and confided in by their Government, appointed to high commands in the army, and supported all their lives out of the public treasury, should, in the hour of their country's need, turn their swords against her, and attempt her life, and then be permitted to live in her history as heroes, and not as felons, is a proposition that may find advocates among the sympathizers with slavery in the British Parliament, but can hardly fail to shock the moral sense of every loyal and virtuous community.

But whatever may be the fate of traitors, treason has been foiled, and slavery is dead. This is the great event of the nineteenth century—the great glory of America to-day.

She leads four millions of men, women, and children out of the most inhuman bondage ever known in the history of the world, tells them that all men are created equal; and invests them with their natural rights! Why do we rejoice? What mean the people's oblations of praise and gratitude on this anniversary? It is the spontaneous and irrepressible tribute of the true American heart, to that eternal justice which, keeping pace with advancing Christianity, has made America free, and is destined to overcome oppression in whatever form it may exist, wherever man can look up to the heavens and behold the glory of God.

But our duties are not ended. These children of unpropitious fortune, lifted from the degradation into which they had been sunk by the weight of their chains—yesterday trembling slaves—are American citizens to-day, born on the soil. They will now, by their free labor, acquire property of their own. They will be subject to taxation, and to the call of their country whenever their services may be required in war. In some of the States they constitute a majority of the population.

By the law of the Revolution, taxation without representation is robbery.

By the Constitution, this is a Republic, and the people of every State shall be guaranteed a republican form of government.

By the Declaration of Independence, all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Looking into the future, it is therefore plain that, these people must, sooner or later, be invested with all the rights and privileges of American citizens—“*rights inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.*”

Prejudice may stand awhile in the way of this consummation. The mere politician may seek to postpone or evade the question. The honest citizen will meet it squarely, and discuss it calmly. It is not without its embarrassments; but the sooner it is settled, the better for the country. True, they are ignorant; but the loyal soldier of the Republic will testify that, he always found a friend in the cabin of the uneducated negro, and always an enemy in the house of the educated master! They are ignorant, because, by the code of slavery, *it was a crime to instruct them.* They are not more ignorant, than the poor whites of the South, or than multitudes in the North, who escaped from oppression and degradation in Ireland, to the freedom of the ballot-box in America. Let us lift them up, as we do the oppressed of foreign lands who seek our shores, and strengthen their attachment to the country by convincing them that we are just. In the language of Mr. Madison, let us “*rest all our political experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government.*”

Let America “be just and fear not!” The Power above us, has so often and so signally balked our finite judgment, and overruled disasters for our good within the last ten years, that men who never saw His hand in anything before, have watched it with wonder and with reverence as it has led our country through a sea of her own blood to the highest seat among the nations. If the people are faithful to the principles of the Declaration, may they not safely leave the result to the direction of the same Great Ruler of the world in whom our fathers put their trust?

God grant that, when the sun shall rise on the Centennial Anniversary of our Independence, only eleven years distant, there shall be no spot now covered by the flag of our country, from which a cry of injustice or oppression may ascend to His attentive ear. And, if I may be permitted to utter in this presence the fervent prayer of an American heart, may you, to whom I now speak, live to rejoice on that day, in the full and triumphant fruition of every principle of the American Revolution.

At the close of the Oration, the following Hymn, written for the League and the occasion by GEORGE H. BOKER, Esq., was sung by the choir and the audience:

AIR—“*Old Hundred.*”

Thank God! the bloody days are past,
Our patient hopes are crowned at last;
And sounds of bugle, drum, and fife,
But lead our heroes home from strife!

Thank God, there beams o'er land and sea
Our blazing star of victory;
And everywhere, from main to main,
The old flag flies, and rules again!

Thank God, O dark and trodden race,
Your Lord no longer veils His face;
But through the clouds and woes of fight
Shines on your soul a better light!

Thank God, we see on every hand
Breast-high the ripening grain-crops stand;
The orchards bend, the herds increase;
But oh, thank God, thank God, for Peace!

The Doxology was then sung, and the ceremonies closed by a benediction from the Rev. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

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